

# IDAHO E911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

## OFFICIAL MINUTES

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August 5, 2004

The inaugural meeting of the Idaho E911 Commission was held on this date in the Gold Room, Idaho State Capitol Building. Pam Ahrens, Director of the Department of Administration, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### **Members Present:**

Sheriff Gary Aman, Owyhee County Sheriff's Office  
Teresa Baker, Ada County Prosecutor's Office  
Clint Berry, Qwest  
Chief Ben Estes, Retired—Pocatello Fire Department  
Dia Gainor, Chief, Idaho Bureau of Emergency Medical Services  
Dennis Johnson, Boise Fire Department  
Chief R. David Moore, Blackfoot Police Department  
Mayor Garret Nancolas, City of Caldwell  
Representative Rich Wills  
Bill Bishop, Director, Bureau of Homeland Security  
Ann Cronin, Special Assistant, Idaho State Police  
Joanna Guilfooy, Deputy Attorney General and Ex-Officio Member

### **Members Absent:**

Commissioner Matt Beebe, Canyon County Commission

### **Others Present:**

Pam Ahrens, Director, Department of Administration  
Representative David Langhorst  
Representative John Campbell  
Mike Kane, Kane and Tobiason  
Dan Chadwick, Idaho Association of Counties  
Bob Wells, Idaho Chiefs of Police Association  
Les Shadduck, Ada County  
Bart Hamilton, Ada County Sheriff's Office

Mike Blomstrom, Ada County Sheriff's Office  
Lt. Chris Smith, Canyon County Sheriff's Office  
Roger Sharp, Canyon County Sheriff's Office  
Megan Ronk, Office of the Governor  
Wayne Hart, Public Utilities Commission  
Dodie Collier, Statewide Interoperability Executive Council  
Joe Roche, Department of Administration  
Rich Elwood, Information Technology Resource Management Council  
Greg Zickau, Information Technology Resource Management Council  
Nathan Bentley, Information Technology Resource Management Council  
Rick Thompson, Department of Administration  
Connie Smith, Department of Administration  
Scot Maring, Department of Administration  
Diane Blume, Department of Administration  
Tammy Ferguson, Tenxsys  
Rick McLaury, CML Emergency Services  
Kevin Young, Mountain West Communications  
Edward Flagan, Mountain West Communications

## **Review E911 Commission Enabling Statute/Legislative Intent**

Mr. Mike Kane, from the law firm of Kane and Tobias and lobbyist for the Idaho Sheriff's Association, along with Bart Hamilton of the Ada County Sheriff's Office and Manager of the 911 Center for the Sheriffs' Association, provided the Commission with a history and overview of the Emergency Communications Act, Title 31, Chapter 48 of the Idaho Code. Attached, as part of these minutes is a copy of Mr. Kane's presentation, which addresses amongst other things, how moneys come into the Emergency Communications Fund, how the moneys are spent, and responsibilities of the members.

The charge of the Commission, he said, is to determine the status and operability of communications systems statewide; determine the need for upgrades to the systems; determine costs for the upgrades; recommend guidelines and standards for the operation of systems; serve as a conduit for federal funds to support the systems; recommend funding mechanisms for implementation of upgrades; report annually to the Legislature; enter into contracts with agents, employees or consultants; and, promulgate rules to carry out duties of the Commission. The legislation also tasks the Commission with mediation functions.

Representative Langhorst pointed out the legislative intent of the new statute is to create a Commission to carry forward the desired actions outlined by the Statewide 911 Task Force in 2003, and to address the noted areas of concern and deficiencies in the state's communications systems. In doing so, he said, the E911 Commission and the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council must coordinate and overlap in carrying out their missions.

Representative Campbell added that his involvement with enhancing emergency communications in Idaho resulted from the fact that 911 services are not available in some areas of the state, and that services in the north are contracted out-of-state. He stressed the need for regional centers and cooperation between all governmental entities.

## **Review E911 Funding**

### **Current Local Assessments**

Mr. Dan Chadwick, Executive Director for the Idaho Association of Counties, distributed results of a recent survey conducted by the Association inquiring of counties' current charges for emergency communications fees, annual collection from the fee, and total dollars collected annually for landlines versus those collected annually for wireless phones. In summary, he said, most counties have adopted the \$1 per month fee—one county assesses \$.75, and another, \$.50. Four counties do not collect any fee, and Custer County only collects a fee from one portion of the county. All fees are based on residential billing address. Counties are just beginning to collect fees for wireless services, which will eventually bring in more money than landlines, he estimated.

Total annual collections from all counties is \$11,466,434, which translates to a maximum of \$114,664 that could be transferred to the Commission for its operating budget, should it choose to assess the full 1% of the total emergency communication fees collected annually, as authorized by statute. County fiscal years run from October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Creation of Statewide Emergency Communications Fund**

Connie Smith, Financial Officer with the Department of Administration, explained that the Controller's Office and the Treasurer's Office have established a structure to accommodate the Emergency Communications Fund. Counties will provide quarterly fee remittance reports to the Treasurer. Because the Fund is in the Department of Administration, it will be responsible for reporting expenditures to the Commission, and to the Legislature. The Department also has the ability to set-up a federal reporting process for future grant monitoring.

## **Overview of Current Telecommunications and Wireless Services in Idaho**

### **Current Telecommunications**

Mr. Clint Berry from Qwest gave an overview of telecommunication services in Idaho. He said Ada County was the first county to implement enhanced 911 wireless services.

Verizon, which is the main provider in north Idaho is not equipped with basic 911 services.

Elmore County is considering enhanced 911 services, but has a challenge with the Military Base, which operates under different standards—establishing statewide consistent standards will be a challenge for this Commission, he said. Caribou County is also considering enhanced 911, and Boise County has been collecting the fee, but is still unable to deploy basic 911 services due to its remote locations. One reoccurring issue for vendors is that many times they are put into the position of mediating the coordination between cities and counties. However, he said, the most prevalent issue the industry now faces is the lack of human resources. As telecommunications systems get more complex, there are not enough personnel in jurisdictions to fully implement and support them.

Future challenges to E911 services, he said, include Voice Over Internet calls because there is no phone number, name, or location associated with the call. Additionally, On Star Services need to be addressed, as well as calls coming in from airplanes, and blackberry devices, for example.

### **Wireless Services in Idaho**

Mr. Joe Roche, Administrator for the Department of Administration's Division of Information Technology and Communication Services, and Wayne Hart from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) provided an overview of Wireless Services in Idaho.

Mr. Roche reported that there are about 18 wireless service providers in Idaho, 70 public safety-answering points (PSAP), 469,645 households, and 2.2 to 4 million travel parties annually entering our state. He explained the FCC launched the Wireless Enhanced 911 Coordination Initiative, and a couple of years ago it imposed quarterly reporting by wireless carriers that notes who is asking for E911 services, and the dates that the provider will offer those services. The Federal Communication Commission established December 31, 2005 as the milestone for the industry to provide enhanced 911 services nationwide. Based on that milestone, he presented the progress reported by wireless carriers in Idaho (see attached).

Mr. Hart explained the PUC does not regulate cell phones; however, because of their wide use, they are now contributing toward 911 services. Currently, there are about 800,000 wireless phones in Idaho and 700,000 wireline phones. PSAP's report receiving more calls from wireless phones.

### **E911 Status Report by Local Government "First Responders"**

Commissioner Moore expressed that the mediation responsibility authorized the Commission will be of great value. There are 88 Police Chiefs, and 44 County Sheriffs statewide--there must be a consolidated effort in supporting joint dispatch centers. Funding will be available through the federal government for 911 infrastructures, now

that this Commission has been created, and we need to take care of the emergency communication “have-nots” in the state.

Fire Departments in our state, Commissioner Estes remarked, range from municipal, county, fire district, subscription services, to volunteers. There are 232 fire entities in Idaho and most are legal entities—a few are volunteer. Interoperability is a real issue, but he feels governance is the biggest concern. The system works best when there is representation from each of the first responders on the Joint Powers Board that oversees the joint dispatch centers.

Commissioner Johnson reported that the Idaho Emergency Medical Services Association (IEMSA), a consensus-building group, began about a year ago. He said EMS providers are as diverse in their organization as fire departments are in Idaho. Some are funded through fundraising, some are volunteer, and others are tax-supported. The smaller entities rely on grant moneys.

## **Briefing By Bureau of Homeland Security**

Mr. Bill Bishop, Director of Idaho’s Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS), noted about \$53 million is available in a Department of Justice and Federal Homeland Security Fund for distribution to individual states. In 2002 Idaho was notified it would receive \$22 million of those funds, but we did not have the proper infrastructure to manage it, he said. In addition, there are some very stringent requirements attached to the expenditure of those funds.

Subsequently, a county-by-county survey was completed to determine the status of emergency communication systems in order to identify immediate needs and consequently, commit that money within a short period of time. Some very good assessment materials resulted from this exercise, which helped in supporting the creation of this Commission, he said.

Idaho is spending these grant moneys at the local level by issuing purchase orders and then sending the billings to the BHS. He anticipates about \$22 million more coming to Idaho in 2004, and then about \$11 million in 2005. This money is available for the needs of responders and for interoperability issues, for example. The grant moneys are not to be used to replace taxpayer-funded items, or for things that taxpayers should fund. The moneys cannot build a dispatch center, for example; however, they can be used to improve dispatch centers by helping to achieve interoperability. These moneys are available to this Commission for equipment, planning, and technical assistance.

## **State Interoperability Executive Council, and Statewide Microwave System**

### **SIEC**

Commissioner Gainor pointed out that she represents the Department of Health and Welfare on the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC). On behalf of the Council, she said, SIEC would like to establish an atmosphere of cooperation, compatibility, connectivity, and interoperability between the Council and the Commission. The SIEC was formed in August of last year.

SIEC's focus on interoperability specifically addresses two-way radio connectivity between public safety entities. She then listed the accomplishments of the Council over the past year (see attachment).

One huge undertaking, she added, is the statewide public safety communications assessment/inventory—surveys have been distributed to all public safety emergency response organizations, every public safety answering point, and every transportation, public works entity, etc. that uses radio communications. The results of these surveys will be of assistance to this Commission, as well. SIEC has also resolved to initiate a feasibility study of the coverage and compatibility of existing two-way radio systems and their evolution to a P25-trunked system operating on a primary backbone of 700 MHz.

### **Statewide Microwave System**

Mr. Roche reported that the Department of Administration is administering the multi-agency modernization project of the statewide microwave system. Work has been underway since 1995 and will be completed this year. It is a shared resource for first responders to communicate amongst themselves or back to the dispatch center. Virtually everything from north Idaho to southwest Idaho and then to Idaho Falls is digital at this time. The leg currently being upgraded is the section from Idaho Falls to Salmon. Idaho's microwave system is one of the more advanced in the continental U.S. Since the state did not have the money to upgrade the system in the very northern section of the state, a partnership was entered into with the US Forest Service, he explained.

There are more than 50 communication sites throughout Idaho, and the space and capacity is shared with other public safety jurisdictions. As a result of the 2002 Olympics, the State of Utah collaborated with Idaho to make communications possible between first responders in both states. Therefore, a microwave path currently extends into Utah at our state's southeast corner.

## **Election of Chair and Other Officers**

After discussion, the members decided to establish the positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary with the understanding that the Secretary will be tasked with

document management functions. Later, the position of Treasurer, or the creation of a finance committee can be considered.

Commissioner Moore nominated Mayor Nancolas as the Commission Chair.

**MOTION: It was moved and seconded that Commissioner Nancolas be elected Chairman of the Idaho E911 Emergency Communications Commission. The motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Johnson nominated Commissioner Wills as Commission Vice-Chairman.

**MOTION: It was moved and seconded that Commissioner Wills be elected Vice-Chairman of the Idaho E911 Emergency Communications Commission. The motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Moore nominated Commissioner Cronin as Commission Secretary.

**MOTION: It was moved and seconded that Commissioner Cronin be elected Secretary of the Idaho E911 Emergency Communications Commission. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **Prioritization of E911 Commission Responsibilities**

Chairman Nancolas introduced Terry Lester, Director of Digital Integration from the J.R. Simplot Company, who agreed to facilitate the afternoon session. Mr. Lester reviewed with the group that the afternoon session will draw out a listing of issues to be eventually addressed by the Commission and their relative priorities.

The members identified five major categories and below each one, they listed specific issues to be addressed by the Commission. Subsequently, each member voted on what the Commission's three most immediate priorities should be.

### **Funding**

Portion of 1% to be assessed **(4 votes)**  
How to fund the "have-nots" **(2 votes)**  
Sub-optimize by city?  
Grant funding resources  
Commission (ECC) funding/budget **(1 vote)**  
Recommendation/advice on E911 spending  
(ECC needs to decide scope)  
Proactive to fund more than systems  
(e.g. services, training, implementation)  
(How will Title 31 money be used)  
Federal funds application process  
(track, assess, audit, measure)

### **Governance**

Cooperation—PSAP representation  
Know statutory responsibilities **(1 vote)**  
ECC by-laws, committees **(10 votes)**  
Guidelines for operations  
Define level of mediation funding  
Recommend model org. structure  
ECC focus on all areas  
(Clearinghouse for E911 assistance)  
Long-term vision  
(systems, organizations, processes)  
Short-term tactical plan  
ECC statewide representation

Fee collection vs. ECC assistance  
(City must vote in fees)  
Statewide E911 procurement contracts  
(Mutual needs buying power)  
Conduit for funding

### **Systems**

Scope of system—ECC role (equip, people)  
Money for infrastructure  
System implementation  
(technical issue, project management)  
Technical resources  
Who defines architecture, and how do we  
use and leverage systems  
Need to understand baseline (education)  
Identify technical resources & leverage  
Regulate and consolidate systems  
System interoperability standards  
Business continuity—backup/recovery  
Standards to engage vendors  
Define minimum standards for system,  
vendors (including purchasing)

### **Evaluation/Assessment**

What is the baseline by County (as-is) **(5 votes)**  
Leverage Office of Disaster Preparedness survey  
Evaluate current standards  
Define clear criteria for needs  
(System applications & funding)  
Recommend model – performance indicators  
Establish “to-be” baseline  
Skills to do assessment  
Consolidate system recommendations/analysis  
Interstate system (e.g. Pullman, WA)

Acquire wireless representative member  
Mediation Standards/Criteria  
ECC staff support **(1 vote)**  
Stay focused on mission  
(If it’s not broken, don’t fix it.)

### **Education/Information**

How will the 1% assessment be used  
E911 need for money, improvements  
Promote cohesive, solidarity,  
interoperability, statewide cooperation  
SIEC et. al.--standard definitions  
Communicate—whose doing what?  
Message: consolidate, coordinate,  
funding, standards, leverage, etc.  
May conflict with autonomy.  
Tech. Educ. of ECC members **(9 votes)**

Based on the brainstorming session, Mr. Lester summarized those issues that received the most votes for immediate priority (see notation above) that would serve as the focus for the next couple of meetings.

1. The members felt their first task is to educate themselves on terminologies and technologies involved with E911.
2. Secondly, they felt the Commission must establish its by-laws in order to proceed in a structured and systematic fashion with future tasks and plans. The Commission must also fully understand its responsibilities under the enabling statute.
3. Also a high priority is establishing a baseline assessment by county of existing emergency resources and systems, as well as a needs assessment for each county.



4. The members felt they must determine what percent of the “up-to-1%” assessment the Commission will bill each county, and how that money is to be budgeted. They agreed the budget information would be provided to each county to inform them how their assessed moneys will be used.
5. Next priority is to determine how the Commission might be able to fund the needs of the smaller “have-not” communities.
6. Finally, to be addressed initially is the Commission’s staffing needs.

After much discussion, the members agreed to tackle the priorities established in chronological fashion. Because much of the initial work to be done is time sensitive, due to timing of the counties’ budgetary cycle, the Commission decided it would meet for full days on a monthly basis.

**MOTION: Commissioner Gainor moved, and it was seconded by Commissioner Johnson, that the Commission meet on the first Thursday of each month. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Nancolas suggested in order to accomplish some of the groundwork in time for the upcoming meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup> that committees be established representing the priorities as determined by the Commission.

**MOTION: Commissioner Bishop moved, and it was seconded by Commissioner Baker that a committee be formed to draft a set of Commission By-Laws for consideration at the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mayor Nancolas asked that members of this Committee include Commissioner Wills as Chairman, along with Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Guilfooy.

**MOTION: Commissioner Gainor moved, and it was seconded by Commissioner Bishop that a committee be formed to distribute materials and coordinate an educational presentation for this Commission at its upcoming meeting addressing terminologies and technologies of E911. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mayor Nancolas asked that the members of this Committee include Commissioner Johnson as Chairman, along with Commissioner Berry, and Dodie Collier, SIEC Project Manager.

Based on earlier discussion, it was agreed that a listing of available resources and existing staff be consolidated by the next meeting for use by the Commission in putting together its baseline numbers. Commissioner Gainor agreed to head up this effort with the assistance of Commissioner Bishop and staff at the Department of Administration. Commissioner Baker expressed that although most counties may be aware of the “up-to-1%” quarterly assessment, they do not know exactly what portion of that percent will be assessed. This is their budgeting season now, and the Commission should communicate to the counties just as soon as possible. The end of the counties’ first quarter is December 31, 2004.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bishop moved and it was seconded by Commissioner Moore to direct the Department of Administration to send out notification to 911 money recipients that the 1% assessment will begin during the counties' first quarter beginning October 1, 2004, and that the Commission use the resources of the Association of Cities, and the Idaho Association of Counties to help in the notification process. No vote was taken.

Several Commissioners expressed discomfort with announcing the 1% assessment without letting the counties know how the funds will be spent.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** Commissioner Johnson moved and it was seconded by Commissioner Baker that the Commission send a notice immediately to the counties letting them know that at its September meeting the Commission will consider guidelines and a budget, and based on their decision, impose an assessment up to 1%. The motion passed unanimously.

In order to prepare for the budget presentation at the upcoming meeting, Chairman Nancolas suggested a Budget Committee be formed including himself as Chairman, along with Director Ahrens, and Commissioners Estes and Moore.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Johnson moved and it was seconded by Commissioner Moore that a Budget Committee be formed to bring back to the Commission for consideration at its September meeting an operating budget. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Johnson moved and it was seconded by Commissioner Cronin to adjourn the August 5, 2004 Idaho E911 Emergency Communications Commission meeting at 3:50 p.m.

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Mayor Garrett Nancolas, Chairman  
Idaho E911 Emergency Communications Commission

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Diane K. Blume, Management Assistant  
Department of Administration